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INFORMATION REPORT

2-02-A-0404 25X1A

COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)
SUBJECT Production of Geiger Counters
by Pressler A.G., Curedorf (Thuringia)

DATE DISTR. 5 August 1948

NO. OF PAGES

25X1A

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

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SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

25X1X

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Information has been received that in March 1948 a monthly production quota of 10,000 Geiger counters was imposed on the Pressler AG by the Russians. Actual delivery of Geiger counters by the firm to the Russians has been on a much smaller scale. From the time when delivery first began until mid-May 1948, the firm supplied about 1,000 Geiger counters to the Russians. The production capacity of the firm is much higher than this, although its production of Geiger counters is authentically hampered by a shortage of potassium-free glass. The firm, however, has also given a more or less false explanation of the low delivery figures to the Russians, namely, the shortage of platinum. Actually, platinum is not indispensable because it can be replaced by other metals, such as molybdenum or nickel-plate iron.

2. The Geiger counters produced by the Pressler AG are provided with neon bulbs working as voltage stabilizers; a normal counter has 10 to 12 of them. Pressler AG, in cooperation with the Glimmlampen AG in Oberweissbach, is producing neon bulbs, mainly of small size, for this purpose. Some are exported to western Germany, and it is reported that Göttingen University recently received a small shipment.
3. The use of neon bulbs as voltage stabilizers is mainly based on the fact that the voltage produced in Germany and Russia is hard to keep constant when used in connection with Geiger counters. Constant voltage could also be produced with batteries (accumulators); but, since lead is a very scarce item in Russia, the Russians and Germans have been using neon bulbs. Their use goes back to the fact that a neon bulb working with normal cathode drop (i.e., if the cathode is not entirely covered by the glow light) has a voltage drop which is largely independent of the current. The use of neon bulbs for purposes of voltage stabilization was introduced in Germany by Geffken and Richter around 1929. They are used in Germany and Russia, as in the United States, in connection with Geiger counters for the purpose of rendering visible the fraction of impulses transferred by the scaler from the Geiger tube to the mechanical counter. Because of the above mentioned reasons, and under the present conditions, their use as voltage stabilizers in Germany and Russia is of importance.

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Class. CHANGED TO: TS

Auth: DDA Memo 4 Apr 78

Date: 1978 Approved For Release 2001/04/12 : CIA-RDP82-00457R001700270011-6

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